A DECLARATION

Or Testimony given by Captain

ROBERT NORWOOD

Under his hand, (the which was by him publickly read at a meeting in Ab-church before Mr. Sidrack Simpson together with many others;)

April 21. 1651.

Together with several his answers and desires, proposed to them for satisfaction after his

EXCOMMUNICATION;

Worthy the most serious consideration of all: Now brought to publick view for clearing of truth, discovering of error, and his own vindication in reference to many unjust and untrue aspersions cast upon him.

June 9

LONDON,

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BRITAN
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Or Testimony given by Captain

ROBERT NORWOOD

Under his hand, (the which was by him publickly read at meeting in Ab-church before Mr. Sidrack Simpson together with many others;)

April 21. 1651.

Wherein is laid downe his beliefe concerning God, what he is, what Christ is; and what the Spirit is; what the soul is; what the body and spirit of man is; and also his beliefe concerning the resurrection: With certain quere's proposed concerning what the Divell Satan or Serpent is? what Antichrist, the false prophet or dragon is? what the true and very Christ is? Now brought to publick view for clearing of truth, discovering of erro, and his own vindication in reference to many unjust and untrue Aspersions cast upon him.

I Do beleeve one God, or one infinite eternal being, which onely or alone gives a being to all things that are, in whom, from whom, and by whom, all things do consist, exsist and subsist, he to be unchangeable or immutable, whose essence and presence is every where, yet comprehended no where, he onely having life in himselfe and is the alone life of all things, whether visible or invisible; in him I verily beleeve there is not the least variation, or shadow of change, for he Is or *I am*: That this same infinite, eternal one hath given a three-fold declaration or manifestation of himselfe in One.

I do farther beleev, according to the Scriptures, the declaration, manifestation or outgoing of this infinit, eternal being in or by the word in infinite wisdome and power in creation, according to that which is written, That by it all things were made, and without it was made nothing that was made; which is also called Christ or the first-borne or onely begotten of the Father, or the Anointed or anoining of God; in which respect, he is said to be the life and light

of

of the world, as indeed he is, which I ſtedfaſtly beleeve; and that this light (as it's written) ſhineth in the darkneſſe, though the darkneſſe comprehend it not; and that he was in the world, and the world was made by him, though the world knew him not; that he came to his own though his own received him not: the ſame Chriſt I ſtedfaſtly beleeve to be my onely and alone light and life and ſalvation; and ſo much and ſo far as I have attained, him or it or rather he or it, is riſen up or brought forth, it or himſelfe in me, ſo far I judge my ſelfe to live or be alive or ſaved, or to have attained ſalvation and no farther: and what ever elſe is in me, I take to be of the fleſh, the devill or darkneſſe, or ſin or hell, antichriſt or of the falſe prophet: for that which is borne of the fleſh is fleſh, and that which is borne of the ſpirit is ſpirit. That this Chriſt, Word, or Son is One with the Father in the Spirit, I alſo ſtedfaſtly beleeve.

I do farther beleeve concerning the Spirit, or Holy Ghoſt as its called, that it infinitely and eternally proceeded from the Father and the Son, and that he is the immediate life and being of all things, and is the alone true witneſſe-bearer to the father and the ſon *John* 5, 6. and neither Father nor Son, yet both Father and Son, not three but One: One intire, ſimple, undivided being in themſelves; whence in Scripture he is called ſometimes the ſpirit of the father or God, and ſomtimes the ſpirit of Chriſt; in or by which ſpirit we have communion with the Father and the Son: he in us, we in him are by it made perfect in one; which alſo is more or moſt properly called the ſpirit of truth; or rather the ſpirit which is truth: he onely and alone leading into all truth, or the all of all truth which is God himſelfe.

Concerning that we call man, *Paul* diſtinguiſhes into three: ſoul, body, and ſpirit. The ſoul I take or beleeve to be of the divine eſſence: for it's ſaid, God breathed into him the breath of life, and he or it became a living ſoul: for ſo the Scripture renders the divine principle, ſometimes he, ſometimes it; and indeed, that which is there ſaid to be breathed into man, I cannot conceive to be leſſe or other then his own eſſence or ſpirit, there being nothing but himſelfe, to go forth from and in himſelf unto us: he in his Son by his Spirit, ſtating himſelf in us though in weakneſſe, called elſewhere his Image, or Spirit; as where its ſaid, My ſpirit ſhall

not alway ſtrive with man: for that he alſo is fleſh. It's called alſo the ſpirit of truth or which is truth, true holineſs or truth in holineſſe and righteouſneſſe: which image or life of God in man, is conſeſt by all or moſt if I miſtake not neither was nor could be totaly or finaly loſt, thoughmuch defaced as they call it: And truly (as I conceive) there muſt be, and is a perfect truth in every created Creature according to its kind, which is the inviſible life and being of it, the viſibility being onely a repreſentation or figure of the inviſible life and glory, according to that in the *Romans*, That which may be knowne of God, is manifeſt in them: for God hath ſhewed it unto them: for the inviſible things of him, that is, hiseternal power andGod-head are ſeen by the creation of the world, being conſidered in his workes, to the intent they ſhould be without excuſe. By the God-head muſt be there meant Trinity in Unity & Unity in Trinity; yet evrey thing in its order, kinde or end, according to what he hath appointed every veſſel to hold forth of himſelf, according to that in the *Corinths*, *where* it is ſaid, that there are *bodies* heavenly, and bodies earthly; and that the glory of the heavenly is one, and theglory of the earthly is another; and that one ſtar differeth from another in glory: yet are all theſe but one in the union, according to that *Paul* ſpeakes in another place, that there are ſeveral gifts and adminiſtrations, yet but one ſpirit, and all by one and the ſame ſpirit; which perfect and inviſible truth cannot be leſſe or other then the divine eſſence: Man carrying the beautious tranſparent ſplendor of the repreſentation in this earthly creation; yet is not God the Creature, nor the Creature God: for we muſt hold God and the created by God for could you ſpeak all; the inviſible glories *ſhadowed* or held forth in the whole viſible creation, you could not ſpeake God: for he is all things yet nothing; *He is*; which ſhort word, if truly known and underſtood, ſpeaks him moſt. And indeed, were this light, life, or image of God inman, wholly extinct, man would become more brutiſh then the beaſts; which that it is not, appears plainly to me from that place where it is written, That the Gentiles who have not the law, do the things contained in he law; which ſhew the effects of the law written in their hearts, their conſciences bearing witneſſe, & their thoughts accuſing or excuſing one another.

For

For the ſpirit of man or man's naturall ſpirit, It's that if I miſtake not, which is called the Devill, or Satan, or Serpent, or Anti-Chriſt, or falſe prophet, or ſpirit of darkneſſe, or death, or ſinne, or hell, *James* 1. 14, 15. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed. Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſinne: and ſinne, when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death.* Hence Chriſt teſts the Scribes and Phariſees, they *are of their father, the Devil, and his works* they do who was a lier or deceiver from the beginning: hence alſo ſome are called dogs, ſome foxes, ſome wolves in ſheepes-*clothing*: and *Paul* is ſaid to fight with beaſts at *Epheſus*: & Chriſt when tempted by *Peter*, (although a Diſciple) he calls him Satan: Every one or every thing taking its denomination from the property or quality of that ſpirit which hath the major or moſt ruling power and dominion in and over him or it. It's ſaid, here are legions of divels: & we ſay, there is a covetous devil, an unclean devill, an envious devil, a wrathful deivl and the like. And ſo it's ſaid, there are many Anti-chriſts: no one carrying the whole fountain in him, though each one be from one fountain: ſo on the contrary, no one hath the whole fountain of life or light in him, (if I may ſo ſpeak) but every one in meaſure according to the good pleaſure of him who filleth all in all things. Hence *Paul* ſaith there are babes and ſtrong men in Chriſt: and ſo *John* calls ſome children, ſome fahers, ſome young men: and farther ſaith thus. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that hath righteouſneſſe, is righteous, as he is righteous: he that committeth ſin, is of the devil: for the devil ſinneth from the beginning. For this purpoſe the ſon of God was made manifeſt, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil. Whoſoever is borne of God, doth not commit ſin: for his ſeed remaineth in him and he cannot ſin becauſe he is borne of God. And hence *Paul* alſo, It's not I; but Chriſt in me. And againe, It's not I; but ſin in me. And the Scripture every where comprehends all under theſe two ſtates or termes of light and darkneſſe, the natural man, and the ſpiritual man children of light or life, and children of death and darkneſſe, according to the rule, power or government each ſpirit hath in them. Wherefore it's ſaid, Know you not, that to whomſoever you give your ſelves as ſervants to obey, his ſervans

ſervants you are to whom ye obey, whether it be of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſſe? Againe it's written you who were darkneſſe, are now become light; you who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins hath he now quickned, and tranſlated into the Kingdome of Chriſt: and that we are riſen together with Chriſt; and that he is our reſurrection & glory: and that he hath raiſed us up, and *made us* ſit together in the heavenly places or things in Chriſt. And in the ſame 2. to the Ephe. This ſpirit in man is called the ſpirit or Prince that ruleth in the aire, which indeed is an airy, lying notion ſwimming in the head or braine of man, having no foundation or roote in God who is truth, but is alway at enmity with it. We are alſo ſaid to be dead whilſt we live. From all which I conceive, the chief, if not the onely reſurrection pointed unto and intended in Scripture, is our riſing up out of that death and darkneſſe, or hell we were held in or kept under by: or rather Chriſt who is our light, our life, our all in all, ariſing in his owne life, light, power and glory in us, ſwallowing up or deſtroying death, darkneſſe, ſin, hell and what ever elſe is contrary to or againſt him and us and ſo bringing us in and with himſelf into that glory he had in and with the Father before the world was. Wherefore it's ſaid, The kingdome of heaven is within you: & when they ſay, lo here, lo there, beleev it not. But I expect not, neither think this will be in its height and full perfection till the ſeparation by that we call death, it be accompliſhed and compleated, not whilſt in theſe earthly tabernacles, not until we have laid off all our earthly garments, and be clothed upon of him who is indeed our true clothing; which made *Paul* ſo grone with deſire thereof: indeed the Saints are unclothing dayly and marvelous unclothings and clothings are at hand.

For the body which is indeed beaſtial, of the ſame nature and ſubſtance with the beaſts, I conceive and beleeve; it alſo ſhall have its reſurrection in its kinde, together with other of the like kinde, according to that in the firſt of the *Corinthes* 15. For to ſpeak properly, nothing dies, that is, annihilated, as many do imagine; but is changed from glory to glory: but for the ſoul to be reunited again to this earthly beaſtial body of fleſh blood, and bones after ſepara-

tion,

tion, and to live together in ſome one or more place or places, ſome to enjoy eternall happineſſe or ſalvation, and other ſome eternal miſery and damnation; I find no foundation in ſcripture firme enough to build any ſound belief upon: for Chriſt ſaith, In the reſurection there is no marrying nor giving in marriage, but that they are as the Angels in heaven. Then no eating, nor drinking, except of that ſpiritual rock or *Manna*. Then ſure no fleſh, blood or bones. And as ſure it is, that in no proper or true ſence whatſoever can fleſh and blood inherit the kingdome of heaven: for it luſteth or is at enmity againſt the ſpirit: wherefore I ſay, this doctrine deſerves not only to be exploded the ſchools, but excommunicated all Churches. For he who maketh or worketh a ly, ſhall be ſhut out of the new Jeruſalem; as alſo he who would ſit in the temple of Chriſt, as if he were Chriſt, as if he were the true Anointed or Anointing, who will have others to beleeve as he beleeves, for no other reaſon, but becauſe he beleeves ſo; forgetting that Chriſt, as he is the life, ſo he is the light of every one that comes into the world, & that *none* can come to the Father but by the Son: nor none unto the *Son* but by the Spirit, which 3. are one in the unione.

For farther manifeſtation and clearing of the truth, I deſire in all humbleneſſe of minde and meekneſſe of ſpirit, in reference to my own and others ſatisfaction, in a ſober & orderly way, an anſwer to theſe following quere's.

1. What that Devil or Serpent was, that is ſaid to deceive *Eve*; his, or its nature and property what it is?

2. Whether properly and truly there can be ſaid to have beene, or is, any more then one devil, ſerpent, Satan or deceiver; though he or it manifeſt it ſelfe ſeveral wayes, and after divers manners?

3. What the true and very Anti-Chriſt, or falſe prophet is; their nature, property or quality what it is?

4. Where the true and proper ſeate, reſidence, power or dominion of the devil, Satan, Serpent, deceiver, or Dragon is, or this falſe Chriſt, or falſe prophet is?

5. Whereby, or wherewith they are ſaid to deceive, or wherein the power or ſtrength of their, or it's temptation or deceit lyes?

1. What the true and very Chriſt is, who is ſaid in Scripture

pture to be the onely and alone light and life of the world?

2. How, and in what ſence he is properly, and truly ſaid to deliver us from ſin, death, and hell?

3. The true, reall and very ground, cauſe and end of his ſufferings, death or deſolution, reſurrection, and aſcenſion; as alſo his incarnation and interceſſion what they figfy or hold forth to us, and how or in what manner or ſence, we are to look upon them, and what uſe we are to make of them, ſince the ſcriptures both old and new are very myſterious, as where Chriſt ſaith, Except ye eat my fleſh, & drink my blood, you have no life in you: and that he was that rock that followed them, and that *Manna* that came down from heaven; And *Paul* ſaith, although he had known Chriſt after the fleſh (which could not be meant of a corporal knowledge) yet henceforth would he know him ſo no more: and he farther ſaith, That Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever?

An anſwer whereunto I deſire on this day ſennit, here in this place before all the people in writing, or elſe ſome other may in love, peace and quietneſſe, have liberty to give anſwer thereunto.

And I do farther declare, what ever man or men, report, accuſe, or charge me with blaſphemy, or any error or errors maintained, countenanced or encouraged by me, or any other thing or matter contrary to or againſt the laws of this Nation, or prejudicial to this State or Common-wealth, and do not duly prove the ſame againſt me, is in the ſight of God and man a ſlanderer, back-biter and murderer: and in caſe any the ſaid crime, or crimes be proved againſt me, I ſhall deſire no favour; but ſhall willingly and readily give up my ſelfe, to undergo and ſuffer what penalty or penalties ſoever by law, is to be inflicted in ſuch caſes without the leaſt partiality.

POST-SCRIPT.

To which *Queres* I could not obtain from Mr. *Simpſon* any anſwer, not ſo much as whether he would, or could anſwer them or no? whether he did leſs then bely or blaſpheme God *before* all the people, I will not, let them preſent judge. And if I prove not him, & the Clergy of *England* generally, who cry out of others for hereſie & blaſphemy, the greateſt deceivers, or falſifiers of the truth, and Blaſphemers (as themſelves call it) in the Nation, let me dy the death. This

This I speake not to cast reproach, disgrace or obloquie, upon any ingenuous, sober, quiet, peaceable-minded man or men; but to stop the career of that spirit, which drives more furiously to the ingaging the people more in blood, then the Bishops did, were their power and other advantages answerable. Let therefore the moderation of your spirits appeare, and judge not least you be judged: for assuredly you are guilty of as great, if not greater crimes then other men.

But stand still and be quiet in your selves, that you may see the great salvation the Lord is about to bring forth.

Be truly noble, search as the Bereans did whether the things be so or no.

It were much to be desired, that the Clergy might once more be injoyned to assemble together, to give an account to the people (of whom and from whom they have received and taken so much of the sweat of their browes) what that true very God and Christ is that they have so long talked of to the people. It may justly be suspected from their *preachings* and practises, that they have need of a *Paul* to shew them what that God and Christ is, whom they ignorantly worship; least the blind leading of the blinde both fall into the ditch.

To them all I propose these quere's, hoping it will not be long before they shall receive answer under a known hand, they being concerning such points in which they are daily conversant; if not, they must give the people leave to say, there is little reason to continue the wages or stipends of such stewards, who can give no account of their stewardship.

Or to beleeve them the true Embassadours of God and Christ when as they cannot tell us what their Lord and master is. Let them then forbear any more to binde the people to their faith and beleefe, since themselves cannot give an account or reason of their own faith and hope that is in them. Tell us also, O ye dreamers, where and what your *Hell* and *Heaven* is. *I acknowledge both.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

ROBERT NORWOOD.

For Master

SIDRACK SIMPSON.

SIR,

INstead of answering my *Queries* proposed, or from Scripture duely proving my assertions, errors. I understand that you with your Church (as you call it) have excommunicated me, I having long before come out from you, having of my self left communion with you, neither could I without sin any longer upon that account, hold communion or fellowship with you, the ground and reason whereof I forbear to publish at present, because I will yet spare you. You have also as I hear, given me up to the Devill, I therefore do here before all this people require of you, whose duty I suppose they will all say it is, to instruct, teach and tell me, what that Devil is to whom you have so given me up, hoping you are not so ignorant as to give me up to him, whom you know not, or what his properties and qualities are?

And then, what it is you have so given up, whether the whole; *Soul, body and spirit? or what part, power or faculty you have given up?*

3. *What power, right and authority you had ſo to do?*

4. *Whether you have power again to deliver me from the devill?*

The reaſon why I require this, is that I might get from under his power and dominion, avoid and be delivered from his ſnares, wiles and ſubtilties, as I and all people ought to do.

Next, I require for how long, or untill what time you have given me up to the Devil? If you ſay, untill I repent; you muſt then firſt prove from ſcripture, that that which I have aſſerted, is to be repented of and turned from, and the contrary to be received, embraced, owned and walked in; which is indeed true repentance, which yet you have not done, as you ought to do, before you make any ſuch proceedings againſt any.

Now I do here ſolemnly promiſe before all the people, that if you ſhall from Scripture prove the things ſuch, whereof you did accuſe me, and I under my hand have aſſerted; that I will ſo farre as God ſhall enable me, truly repent & turn from the ſame, & under my hand *publiſh* my recantation: till which time, I may not recede from the things; leaſt I be found in the ſight of God, & man a deſertor of that truth, God by his ſpirit in the Scriptures hath made known to me; as alſo an eminent and evident *breaker* of that firſt and great command, which ſaith, *Thou ſhall worſhip the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and him only ſhalt thou hear and ſerve*; and become a hearer, ſerver or worſhipper of men, or the falſe or lying ſpirit in men, which is to worſhip the devil: for not to worſhip God or truth, is to worſhip he devil, or a ly.

That

That which you did then charge me with, as error or blaſphemy, was (as I underſtand) that I held the ſoul to be of the Divine eſſence, or of the eſſence of God.

Now I earneſtly deſire, begg and intreate; Nay I do here in the preſence of all this people, require you in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe Embaſſadour or Miniſter you ſay you are, and whoſe mind you then muſt needs have; and as you will anſwer it at the great day of his appearing; that you tell, declare and prove, to me from Scripture or any other way, that holds *Analogie* therewith; what in very deed and truth the ſoul is, that ſo I may repent and recant this my error (if it be found ſo) and be delivered from the power of darkneſs and of the devil or ſnares of Satan, the very end for which Chriſt his *Miniſters* and *Embaſſadors* were ſent, and that in writing; that it may be conſidered, compared with and tryed by the Scriptures and true *Analogie* of our faith, I being very deſirous to forſake all and every error, though carrying never ſo ſpecious a ſhew of truth, though never ſo old or new, profitable or honorable in the worlds eſteem, knowing well what they are, & whence they come and alſo that true ſalvation is only and alone of and in the truth: And that becauſe it's ſtrong above all THINGS, IT, and IT onely being everlaſting.

2. *Secondly, that you prove to me from Scripture, or ſound reaſon, what the ſpirit of man, or man's naturall is.*

3. *What the true and very heaven and hell is, ſpoken of in Scripture,* and you from God or Chriſt (as you ſay)

ſay) ſo much promiſe to, and threaten the people with, the very right and true knowledge whereof, is of the greateſt and higheſt concernment to be clearly made known and diſcovered to the people of all other things: all things elſe being but as it were acceſſaries thereunto, therefore certainely muſt needs be known to you, if you be what you ſay you are: yet it's very much to be feared, that very few of you have the true knowledge either of the one or the other, but that moſt fancy both the one and the other, as the *Papiſts* their Purgatory, and the *Poets* their *Eliſian fields*, is abundantly evident: Both God and the Devill, both death and life, both heaven and hell, being very much nearer to us all, then we are aware of.

I do therefore again in the love and bowels of Chriſt, intreat and beſeech you for my own and others ſatisfaction (as you are, or pretend to be his Miniſter or Embaſſadour) that I may ſpeedily have anſwer hereunto in writing, as alſo to thoſe former *Queries* propoſed, that I may not longer continue in error, and ſo under the power of the Devill or darkneſſe; you have bound your ſelf hereunto, not onely by your profeſſion, but eſpecially by that act of yours againſt me: for how ſhall I believe concerning that which I know not? how ſhall I repent, diſclaime or revoke that you charge as error upon me, except you prove it ſo from Scripture? And do not ſay in excuſe, that I diſown you, as having any relation to you; ſince your ſelf have taken that authority upon yon, and you ought in this caſe to give an account or reaſon of the faith and hope that is in you, as I have done, who pretend not to any ſuch thing as you do.

If

If you do not, let me tell you, I cannot in reason, justice or judgement, take or account you for any other then an impostor, deceiver and deluder of the people, nor will any other sober, judicious man, neither will they esteem your excommunications of any more *worth* then the *Popes bulls*, which equally with those if not more, in respect more is pretended to by you, deserve to be together with your self excommunicated the Nation, and the rest of your fraternity as the very plagues and pests of the Nation, the very fire-brands of hell, workers of all mischief. I speak not to cast contempt upon any sober, peaceable-minded man or men, who seek and follow the truth in love: no, such I love and honor with my soul.

All you charged as crime upon me, so farre as I can understand, in reference to my outward conversation, was, that I should tell a ly in reference to a trust reposed in me: to which I often and again before your selves and divers others, did solemnly protest in the Presence of God, if it were the last word I should speak, I speake not the words as some present conceived I did; and further did declare, that if I did speak them, I was a very knave, rogue, and lier therein; and if I should say I did speake them, I must sin against my own soul, no falsifying or breach of trust was found or proved against me.

James *saith, that the tongue sets on fire the very course of Nature and that it is set on fire of hell, where then is hell? and what then are those criers out of Others, for blasphemers, hereticks and the like? who indeed come*

nearer

nearer the truth, and give a better account thereof then themselves can or will do. Judge O England! Nay, Judge O all ye Nations, who they have been and are, that have thus set *England*, nay all Nations on fire, as at this day; and at whose hands that abundance of bloud which hath been shed shall be required!

Where I speak of the spirit of man or mans natural spirit I do not meane it was made such as is there expresst; no, but no sooner made but it became such, and remaines such until renued, inlightned, or born again: wherfore *Paul* saith, be renued in the spirit of *your* mind, being in your own spirit in which you are fallen and gone from God, from life and salvation and so become dead, beastiall and deviliſh of sinne and hell; be as you were at first, return to your life: this is indeed that Prodigall, that having gotten his stock would now live and be of himself, he *would* not that God should be all, he nothing, but in him, but he would be in and of himself: and this that god of the world, that devill, that beast, that serpent, that dragon that hitherto hath had the chief government of the world, even mans naturall spirit, which is at this day much heightned and improved: but God is comming to destroy both it, and all its seeming gloricus erections, together with that Antichrist, man of sinne, and false Prophet.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ROBERT NORWOOD.

BILLS PROPOSED

FOR ACTS,

OR

PROPOSALLS

Concerning the principall Courts of

ENGLAND.

With other Propoſalls for Bills

Concerning { Keeping of the *Terms*. / Procuring Lawfull *Summons* before *Arreſts*.

By *William Leach* of the Middle-Temple Gent.

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